

MEDIA RELEASE

Shire of Esperance

PO Box 507 Esperance WA 6450

T: (08) 9071 0666 F: (08) 9071 0600

E: shire@esperance.wa.gov.au

www.esperance.wa.gov.au



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40 years of Skylab

This year marks the 40th year of Skylab's descent back to Earth and its impact on the Esperance region.

To recognise this anniversary, the Esperance Museum is hosting a program of activities in the lead up to the anniversary on 12 July for the community to get involved in.

The below activities are incorporated into the Skylab 40th Anniversary Community Program:

- **Re'Space'Cycle:** Partnering with the Shire of Esperance Waste and Recycling department, this is a recycled art competition for school students. Students can participate in this competition by creating something space/Skylab related out of recyclable material.
- **Skylab Styles:** In partnership with the APEX Club of Esperance this is a fashion related competition open to everyone in the community. Entrants will use the theme of Space/Skylab to create a garment and are encouraged to use as much found/recycled material as possible.
- **What's your Skylab Story?:** Community Radio Station, Hope FM, is partnering with the Esperance Museum to help capture stories from our community about Skylab. We want to hear 'What's your Skylab Story.'

Shire President Victoria Brown said, "This July we're celebrating the momentous event of Skylab reentering the earth's atmosphere and breaking up over Esperance as it made its descent forty years ago. Our farming community was seeding that night and many people remember hearing and seeing Skylab soar through the sky as it came down. There are so many stories to tell so make sure, if you have one, that the community gets to hear your Skylab story."

If your community group or business would like to be a part of the program please contact the Esperance Museum. Full details of these activities can be found on the Shire website and Museum and Shire Facebook pages. Keep an eye out over the coming months for more activities and for the full Community program in July.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACT:

Lauren Darge (08) 9071 0626

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Skylab?

Skylab was America's first space station and the world's first big space station. It was orbiting unmanned for just over five years before it returned to Earth breaking up and scattering debris across the Esperance region in 1979. NASA tried to control Skylab falling back to Earth but it was a bit of a bumpy ride.

At 12.30am on 12 July 1979 Skylab burned through the Earth's atmosphere. Skylab started to breakup and burned up as it crossed the Indian Ocean headed towards Esperance. It was a bit like fireworks in the sky as it fell to Earth and lasted for about two minutes. Skylab broke up into many pieces. From here in Esperance all the way to Balladonia, bits of Skylab were found throughout farms and in towns.

What did Skylab Do?

It was a science and engineering laboratory in space. A lot of science experiments were carried out up in space and the results of the experiments came back down to earth for scientists to study. Along with observing the Sun and Earth, Skylab also proved that humans could live and work in space.

How many pieces of Skylab do you have at the Esperance Museum?

We have about 30 fragments of Skylab that have been donated to the Esperance Museum.

How big are they?

We have a range of items in size. Fragments can be as small as a golf ball to as big as a table.

How were these pieces recovered?

A lot of the items were recovered by local community members on their own property. The community donated these items to the Museum and they are on display.

Do you get many visitors coming to see the Skylab pieces?

The Esperance Museum is proud to have items of Skylab as one of our displays. We always receive comments from visitors saying that they have come to see what we have in the Museum as well as more specific comments that they are here to see Skylab. Skylab is quite noteworthy and often visited by professionals in the field.